

Municipality of North Cowichan
Regular Council
MINUTES
March 18, 2026, 5:00 p.m.
Municipal Hall - Council Chambers & Electronically

Members Present Mayor Rob Douglas
 Councillor Mike Caljouw
 Councillor Bruce Findlay
 Councillor Becky Hogg
 Councillor Chris Istace
 Councillor Christopher Justice
 Councillor Tek Manhas

Staff Present Ted Swabey, Chief Administrative Officer (CAO)
 Bill Corsan, General Manager, Corporate Services and Community Relations
 George Farkas, General Manager, Planning, Development and Community Services
 Amanda Young, Director, Planning and Building
 Andrea Hainrich, Deputy Corporate Officer
 Barb Floden, Manager, Communications and Public Engagement
 Barry Davidson, Manager, Bylaw & Licensing Services
 Chris Osborne, Manager, Planning
 Dave Preikshot, Senior Environmental Specialist
 David Conway, Director, Subdivision and Environmental Services
 John Horn, Director, Social Planning and Protective Services
 Marla Laycock, Director, People and Culture
 Moudud Hasan, Senior Manager, Engineering (Transportation and Drainage)
 Pablo Golob, Manager, Development Planning
 Shaun Mason, Director, Parks and Recreation
 Teri Vetter, Director, Financial Services
 Tricia Mayea, Corporate Officer

1. CALL TO ORDER

There being a quorum present, Mayor Douglas called the meeting to order at 5:02 p.m.

2. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

The following items were pulled from the Consent Agenda so that they could be added to the Regular Agenda:

- Item 2.2.4 Kim Haakstad, President & CEO, BC Council of Forest Industries re- Request for Official Endorsement of "Forestry is a Solution"
- Item 2.2.5 Cowichan Community Care Network re- their concerns with the closing of the temporary winter shelter on March 31, 2026
- Item 2.2.7 Else Marie Ostermann, Chemainus Gardens Homeowners Association

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council approve the Consent Agenda and the recommendations contained therein.

CARRIED

2.1 Items for Decision

2.1.1 Council Meeting Minutes for Adoption

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council adopt the minutes of their Regular and Special meetings held March 4, 2026, and Joint Special meeting with Cowichan Tribes on March 5, 2026.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

2.1.2 Sports Wall of Fame – Terms of Reference Amendments

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council approves the amended Sports Wall of Fame Committee Terms of Reference, as attached to the March 18, 2026 report from the Director, Parks and Recreation, which incorporates the Sports Wall of Fame recommendations to:

1. replace the current voting process for Sports Wall of Fame nominations with the NHL Style Point Weighting process as the voting methodology; and,
2. include a formal tiebreaking procedure for circumstances where two or more nominees are tied for selection or induction.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

2.1.3 Halalt First Nation re- letter of support for their Disaster Resilience and Innovation Funding (DRIF) program application

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council authorizes the Mayor to provide a letter of support to the Halalt First Nation for their application to the Disaster Resilience and Innovation Funding (DRIF) program.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

2.1.4 Request from Somenos Marsh Wildlife Society for letters of support for stream restoration work

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council authorizes the Mayor to sign the letter of support, provided as Attachment 2, in the Senior Environmental Specialist's report dated March 18, 2026.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

2.1.5 Stefano Rossi, Founder, Pacific Carbon re- Request for Project Support for their Federal Cleantech Funding Application

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council authorize the Mayor to provide a letter of support to Stefano Rossi, Founder, Pacific Carbon, for their application to the Federal Cleantech Funding stream.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

2.2 Items for Information

2.2.1 Mill Closure Response – Working Group from January 30, 2026 and February 20, 2026

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council receives the draft minutes of the January 30, 2026 and February 20, 2026 Mill Closure Response – Working Group meetings, for information.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

2.2.2 Letter from Mayor Simon Yu, City of Prince George re- their petition to the Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada on public safety concerns

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council receive the February 25, 2026 letter from Mayor Simon Yu, City of Prince George, for information.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

2.2.3 Letter from Mayor Ross Siemens, City of Abbotsford re- Support for UBCM Resolutions

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council receive the March 3, 2026 letter from Mayor Ross Siemens, City of Abbotsford, for information.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

2.2.6 Linden Lalonde, North Cowichan Resident, Social Worker and Parent re- their concerns about the Decampment of Lewis Street and the upcoming closure of the temporary winter shelter

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council receive the March 2, 2026 email from Linden Lalonde, North Cowichan Resident, Social Worker and Parent, for information.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

2.2.8 Open Letter from 46 individuals re- their concerns about the Temporary Winter Shelter at the Ramada Inn closing on March 31st

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council receive the March 12, 2026 open letter from 46 individuals, for information.

ADOPTED ON CONSENT

3. APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT the agenda be adopted as amended.

CARRIED

4. MAYOR'S REPORT

Mayor Douglas provided a verbal update on meetings and activities he recently attended.

5. PUBLIC INPUT ON AGENDA ITEMS

Council received public input from 8 members of the public regarding agenda items 2.2.6, 2.2.8, 9.1, 9.3, and 9.4.

6. PRESENTATIONS AND PETITIONS

6.1 Presenters

6.1.1 RCMP Quarterly Report (October - December 2025)

Staff Sergeant and Acting Officer in Charge, Ken Beard, presented the North Cowichan/Duncan RCMP's quarterly report (October – December 2025) and answered questions from Council.

7. UNFINISHED AND POSTPONED BUSINESS

None.

8. BYLAWS

8.1 Municipal Fine Amendment Bylaw No. 4057, 2026 for adoption

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council adopts Municipal Fine Amendment Bylaw No. 4057, 2026. CARRIED

8.2 Election and Assent Voting Amendment Bylaw No. 4060, 2026 for adoption

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council adopts Election and Assent Voting Amendment Bylaw No. 4060, 2026. CARRIED

8.3 2026-2030 Financial Plan Bylaw No. 4062, 2026 for adoption

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council adopts 2026 – 2030 Financial Plan Bylaw No. 4062, 2026. (Opposed: Manhas)
CARRIED

8.4 Bylaw Offence Notice Enforcement Amendment Bylaw No. 4064 for introduction

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council gives first, second and third reading to Bylaw Offence Notice Enforcement Amendment Bylaw No. 4064, 2026. CARRIED

8.5 Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 4066 for introduction

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council gives first, second and third reading to Fees and Charges Amendment Bylaw No. 4066, 2026. (Opposed: Findlay, Manhas)
CARRIED

9. REPORTS

9.1 Early Consideration – Proposed Official Community Plan Amendment for 3037 & 3047 Westhill Place

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council denies OCP00032 to amend Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 3900, 2022, to redesignate 3037 & 3047 Westhill Place (PID: 017-831-105) from "Rural Residential" to "Special Exemption" to facilitate a 2-lot subdivision of the property.

(Opposed: Caljouw, Findlay, Hogg, Manhas)

DEFEATED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council directs staff to proceed with processing OCP00032 and draft an amendment to Official Community Plan Bylaw No. 3900, 2022, in conjunction with a rezoning application for Council's consideration.

(Opposed: Douglas, Istace, Justice)

CARRIED

9.2 Traffic Safety Review for the Sherman Road/Ryall Road Intersection

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council approves extending the 'no parking' zone on the north side of Sherman Road west of Ryall Road by 6 m to increase visibility and implement this as part of the annual road maintenance work in 2026.

CARRIED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council approves narrowing of the existing wide travel lanes on Sherman Road by introducing an interim protected cycling infrastructure on Sherman Road using cost-effective construction methods and with measures to offset any loss of street parking.

(Opposed: Caljouw, Findlay, Hogg, Manhas)

DEFEATED

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council approves implementing an 'all-way' stop control at the intersection of Sherman Road/Lane Road as part of the 2026 Capital Program subject to availability of resources.

CARRIED

Council recessed at 7:09 p.m., and reconvened at 7:13p.m.

9.3 Island Rail Corridor in North Cowichan

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council directs the Mayor to write to Island Corridor Foundation (ICF) to request that once ICF has completed its engagement process it provides the Municipality with a detailed summary along with an explanation of its mandate.

CARRIED

9.4 Pump Track Proposal – Cowichan Sportsplex

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council:

1. Supports in principle, the development of a pump track, substantially in the location shown in Attachment 2; and,

2. Supports the Cowichan Trail Stewardship Society and the Cowichan Sportsplex in any grant funding requests seeking funds to support the construction of the pump track, substantially in the location shown in Attachment 2. (Opposed: Findlay)

CARRIED

9.5 Implications of Illegal Dumping Near 5544 Indian Road

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council directs staff to

1. Engage with the Ministry of Environment and Parks to obtain an update on progress toward fulfilling the requirements of the Pollution Prevention Order, and provide a summary to senior leadership and Council outlining completed actions and the expected timeline for site remediation; and,
2. Consult with Island Health to confirm any steps taken in relation to the drinking water well at 5544 Indian Road and to assess whether any concerns are warranted regarding potential impacts to drinking water sourced from the Domtar pump site or North Cowichan's downstream wells.

CARRIED

9.6 Cowichan Aquatic Centre Subsidy Request Process

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council directs staff to advise Together We Can to apply through the Leisure Access Program for the requested ten annual passes to the Cowichan Aquatic Centre.

CARRIED

10. NEW BUSINESS

10.1 Consent agenda item 2.2.4 Kim Haakstad, President & CEO, BC Council of Forest Industries re- Request for Official Endorsement of "Forestry is a Solution"

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council authorize the Mayor to write a letter to BC Council of Forest Industries endorsing "Forestry is a Solution" to demonstrate support for BC's Forest Sector.

CARRIED

10.2 Consent agenda item 2.2.5 Cowichan Community Care Network re- their concerns with the closing of the temporary winter shelter on March 31, 2026

IT WAS MOVED AND SECONDED:

THAT Council authorize the Mayor to write a letter to the Cowichan Valley Regional District and BC Housing Society requesting an extension to the temporary winter shelter located at the Ramada Inn to the end of April.

CARRIED

10.3 Consent agenda item 2.2.7 Else Marie Ostermann, Chemainus Gardens Homeowners Association

This item was discussed, recognizing that staff will follow up.

11. NOTICE OF MOTIONS

11.1 Fibre Security and Local Forest Jobs

Councillor Justice introduced the following motion which Council will consider at the April 1, 2026 Council meeting:

"WHEREAS Vancouver Island communities have experienced significant job losses in the forest sector, including curtailments and closures affecting facilities such as the Crofton Pulp and Paper Mill and the Chemainus Sawmill operated by Western Forest Products, with serious economic impacts on workers, families, and rural communities;

AND WHEREAS forestry workers, contractors, and manufacturing employees on Vancouver Island depend on a stable and affordable local fibre supply to sustain family-supporting jobs, resilient rural communities, and the long-term viability of sawmills, pulp and paper operations, and value-added wood manufacturing;

AND WHEREAS significant volumes of raw logs harvested from private managed forest lands continue to be exported without domestic processing, reducing the fibre available to support local manufacturing on Vancouver Island;

AND WHEREAS policies governing Crown timber already prioritize domestic processing, creating an opportunity to strengthen consistency in how fibre resources are managed across the forest sector;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council call on the Government of British Columbia and the Government of Canada to review and strengthen policies governing raw log exports from private managed forest lands on Vancouver Island, with the goal of improving fibre availability for domestic processing, supporting value-added wood manufacturing, and sustaining forestry employment in coastal communities.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Mayor be directed to write to the Premier of British Columbia, the Prime Minister of Canada, the Minister of Forests, the Minister of International Trade, the local MLA and MP, and any other relevant parties, requesting their support and action to strengthen policies that improve fibre availability for domestic processing and sustain a strong and competitive coastal forest sector."

12. QUESTION PERIOD

Council received 2 questions from the public regarding agenda items.

13. ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:52 p.m.

Certified by Corporate Officer

Signed by Mayor